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Andrews Academy students visit Guatemala

Michigan—This spring, Andrews Academy Select Strings and the Silhouettes singing group enjoyed a 12-day music mission trip to Guatemala. Two core statements of the purpose of Andrews Academy include global awareness and mission work to spread the good news of Jesus. For decades, Andrews Academy has organized a biennial service mission trip which usually includes building a church and numerous evangelistic programs for children and adults in a foreign country. This year the Academy initiated a new biennial mission trip focusing on mission service through music.

While in Guatemala, students performed ten concerts and delivered one short presentation at an orphanage. In each of their concerts, at least two students gave testimonies, and Micheal Goetz, Pioneer Memorial Church youth pastor, delivered a sermonette.

Academy students said they were struck by a change they experienced a few days into their tour. During the first few concerts they did well, but said they felt like it was just a musical presentation they were making. Their experience changed as they felt so welcomed and appreciated by the Guatemalan people. Students caught a vision of the ministry of which they were a part, and sang and played with renewed energy and purpose for the remainder of the trip.

A Guatemalan resident sent a message to Andrews Academy after the tour was over, "We are thankful with God for the blessing of 43 missionaries who healed souls with their music. May God bless you abundantly in everything you do. Thank you, Andrews Academy for sharing for 12 days these marvelous students. Adults, children and youth were blessed with this music from Heaven."



Andrews Academy students had a presentation on Thursday evening at the Soccer Stadium of San Miguel Petapa, where the National Symphony Orchestra of Guatemala was performing. They gave our group the first 30 minutes of the program, and the National Symphony Orchestra performed the last 45 minutes. The city's mayor was present and gave special recognition to the school, and the students were able to take pictures with him and the members of the National Symphony Orchestra.

A majority of the concerts were in Seventh-day Adventist churches, and local members took advantage of the opportunity to invite many of their community friends. There were three large presentations in places other than churches where the majority of attendants were not Adventists. The attendance at these three presentations was 2,200.

On Thursday evening, the students presented a concert at the Soccer Stadium of San Miguel Petapa where the National Symphony Orchestra of Guatemala was performing. Academy students had the honor of sharing the performance time with the Guatemala orchestra. The city's mayor was present and gave special recognition to the group, and several students enjoyed taking pictures with him and the members of the Symphony Orchestra after the program.

During the tour, students were thoroughly immersed in the culture and had opportunities to visit places of interest such as the Mayan ruins of Tikal, Lake Atitlán, swim in the Pacific Ocean, and see the beautiful colonial city of Antigua, where the group stayed the last half of the trip. Although students saw and experienced so many new and interesting sights in

Guatemala, it was the Guatemalan people they will remember the most.

A Silhouettes member commented, "If I could stay in Guatemala, I would! This country is so beautiful, and the people we have met have been so wonderful, friendly and welcoming! I thank God for giving me this awesome experience."

While presenting for large audiences in public venues was a great opportunity, many of the students said the presentation at the small orphanage in Guatemala was the highlight of the music mission trip. There, students interacted with the children before and after the small concert. The children at the orphanage were so appreciative of spending time with the academy students. The smiles of the children were contagious, and the academy students left with more smiles and joy than when they arrived.

The driving philosophy of mission trips is to travel and share Jesus in other places of the world. And although students go with the purpose of sharing Jesus in order to bless others, in sharing Jesus they return changed themselves.

One student said, "This trip has made a huge impact on me, and I'm glad I had this opportunity to be a

witness. Thank you, God, for allowing me to come on this trip. I will never forget Guatemala.”

Adventist education has many purposes: To learn about Jesus and have a meaningful relationship with Him, to promote great academic growth, to experience humanity on a global level, and many more. These short-term mission trips often inspire students to consider a life of missionary service.

Upon returning from the trip, an orchestra student shared, “I think God might be calling me to be a missionary in Guatemala one day. They need music teachers, and I think I want to do that there.”



The trip highlight for Andrews Academy students was their musical presentation at a small orphanage in Guatemala. The orphans' smiles were contagious, and the students left with more smiles and joy than when they arrived.

Thank you, community members and family members, for giving financial gifts to help send students on this great, life-changing mission. And thank you for your prayers for a safe trip and mission experience. Your prayers were answered. Please continue to pray that these life-changing experiences will be remembered, will grow, and will continue to transform the lives of students into lifelong service for Jesus.

Steven Atkins, Biology and Earth Science teacher, Andrews Academy



A foundation established by Paul Hufnagel helps fund mission trip expenses for Indiana Academy students. Here students prepare cement to lay blocks for a new church structure.

Essay winners receive money for mission trip

Indiana—Why do I want to go on the Cicero Church mission trip to El Salvador? That was the question that challenged Indiana Academy students in an essay contest, with prize awards of \$300 for first place, \$200 for second place, and \$100 for third place. Ten students accepted the challenge to write for the financial assistance to participate in the trip.

Leaving March 5 and returning March 16, the group included

medical, dental, vacation Bible school and construction teams. The students' challenge was to express why they desired to be a part of one of these teams.

First prize winner Emmanuel “Manny” Lapoterie wrote, “I don't think I could truly express with my words the blessing that mission trips can bring to your life. You enter this new culture with all of these biases, prejudices and mixed feelings all jumbled in your brain, and leave with a piece of that society, that way of life, attached to your soul forever.” (Read Lapoterie's account of the trip in his article on page 42.)

Second prize winner Betty Mchone stated, “When I first went on a mission trip my freshman year, I thought I was going to touch the lives of many people, and they would be extremely happy to see that people are willing to help them. We did indeed get that response, and more. The part I wasn't expecting was for me to be truly blessed. I was blessed beyond measure.”

Third place winner Jasmine Davidson expressed her desire this way: “First and foremost, I *love* helping people. That's what it's all about, right? Well, not only helping the people of El Salvador in a practical, physical aspect through building a church and providing clothes, shoes and hygiene items, but we'll aspire to show them who Jesus is and give them so much more than any gift or package could contain. I think the most important part of life is loving others and pointing them to Jesus. I mean, you're merely a walking breath if you have no life purpose. Jesus is the reason I go on mission trips.”

Each of the other students who entered the essay contest also received \$50 from a foundation set up by Paul Hufnagel for academy students.

Each team which traveled to El Salvador was successful in their mission, and left behind many friends who received much needed help and also a church in which they could worship.